

TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE GLOBAL GUIDANCE ON DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING BILATERAL LABOUR ARRANGEMENTS (BLA): UNPACKING KEY OBSTACLES TO IMPLEMENTATION IN AFRICA



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ILO AND IOM INITIATIVE ON THE BLAs

The idea of analysing, developing guidelines and collecting best practices on BLAs is not new and considerable work has been done by the IOM and ILO. Currently, existing experience of Northern and Southern African migration corridors is studied to further contribute to better understanding the roadblocks, obstacles and impediments in effectiveness of the arrangements.

While there is substantial experience in negotiation, development and implementation of BLAs, including standards and recommendations, recent research suggests that there are still substantial gaps in alignment between existing agreements and international standards as well as best national, bilateral and regional migration management practices. ILO and IOM aim to contribute to a strengthened global guidance and architecture to govern labour mobility through bilateral labour migration arrangements as a step towards effective implementation of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular migration (GCM), Sustainable Development Goals (targets 8.8 and 10.7), African Union's Vision 2063 and other relevant frameworks.

PURPOSE OF A JOINT ACTION

Member States in the African Union developed many arrangements, including bilateral labour agreements, Memoranda of Understanding, wider accords on trade, social and economic cooperation, or similar. All mentioned forms are types of BLAs and play important roles in enhancing the protection of migrant workers' rights, regulation of entrance, sojourn, employment and return, skills recognition and transferability, filling in gaps in labour markets and supply management.

However, these agreements often lack important elements of comprehensive and mutually beneficial instruments,

which in turn increases the risk of disadvantages for migrants, employers, countries and communities of origin and destination.

Providing a self-assessment tool and up to date training for governments and other stakeholders is therefore the purpose of this joint IOM and ILO project. Both organizations assess current practices of developing and implementing BLAs to come up with a methodology and self-assessment tool and the training on how to work with bilateral labour arrangements within a full migration cycle.

BILATERAL LABOUR ARRANGEMENTS: METHODOLOGY AND SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

The methodology and self-assessment tool will address all phases of the BLA cycle; from needs assessment, to negotiation, design and drafting, as well as implementation, and finishing with the monitoring and evaluation. For each phase of the cycle, detailed approaches is developed with practical checklists and assessment tools.

The methodology has been assessed and comments were collected from selected Northern, Southern and other interested African and European countries, as well as experts from international and regional organizations. Expert consultative workshops were conducted with the objective for the participants to exchange experiences on developing and implementing BLAs, as well as to obtain views and feedback to contribute to the methodology and self-assessment tool. The workshops also aimed at identifying common challenges and recommendations on how to achieve better BLA outcomes for workers, employers and countries of origin and destination.

The methodology approach and self-assessment tool is presented at the Intergovernmental Conference in Marrakesh along with suggestions for ways forward and possible arenas for future cooperation and further development.

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